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Crisis Management: Confrontation and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age. by Phil Williams; Sage International Yearbook of Foreign Policy Studies, Vol. III. by Patrick J. McGowan; The Dynamics of International Politics. by Norman J. Padelford; George A. Lincoln; Lee D. Olvey
Review by: J. Frankel

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Both these books, however, possibly still tend to understate somewhat the vulnerability of the United States to disorder and discontent in the system—the dependence of American corporations on the profits of foreign operations being substantially greater than the dependence of the American economy on imports—and thus the political dilemma for policy-makers. But that is to carp unduly and ungraciously. Both from an academic and a political angle, these are important books.

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Crisis Management: Confrontation and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age. By Phil Williams. *London: Martin Robertson. 1976. 230 pp. £7.85.*

Sage International Yearbook of Foreign Policy Studies, Vol. III. Edited by Patrick J. McGowan. *Beverly Hills, London: Sage. 1976. 320 pp. £9.00. Pb: £4.00.*

The Dynamics of International Politics. 3rd edn., By Norman J. Padelford, George A. Lincoln and Lee D. Olvey. *New York: Macmillan Publishing; London: Collier Macmillan. 1976. 603 pp. £7.50.*

PHIL WILLIAMS regards 'crisis management' as an art rather than a science (p. 9) and defines it narrowly but precisely, with reference only to confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union or China which opened a distinct possibility of military hostilities; the Sarajevo crisis serves as a foil. The central line of argument is found in the duality of purpose of crisis management in the nuclear era: on top of promoting conflicting positive national interests the parties have also a common negative interest in ensuring that a nuclear war does not ensue (p. 47 f.).

One quarter of the book is devoted to an outline of the background and development of the concept; the remainder is concerned with the actual practice: the issue of crisis decision-making, of maintaining control over events and of moderating coercive bargaining. The author concludes with a general appreciation of the remarkable set of rules of prudent restraint so far evolved and leaves the question open whether detente may render them unnecessary.

Williams happily uses the insights gained in the formal quantitative American analyses but blends them with a historical/analytical treatment which is more popular on this side of the Atlantic and thus avoids much of the forbidding terminology and abstruseness frequently encountered in literature. The Americans have not, of course, abandoned scientific treatment as the *Sage International Yearbooks of Foreign Policy Studies* clearly show.

In the preface to Volume III the editor surveys with a considerable degree of justified satisfaction, the twenty-eight articles so far published. Many British readers may tend to suspect these writings for varying reasons: their excessive pretension, recondite but frequently faulty methodology, misleading precision due to the employment of mathematical structures based on flimsy sets of assumptions, paucity of substantive findings, use of forbidding terminology, and so on. And yet, despite all these characteristics, the three *Yearbooks* undoubtedly add to our understanding of foreign policy by sharpening the readers' awareness of some facets of the field. Their usefulness would vary with individuals who have had to be both receptive and possess substantial knowledge of political realities; otherwise

it would be of little use and even misleading. All the nine papers in the present volume include, in varying proportion, empirical material, especially on 'the Middle East and the United States, extensive analytical treatment, and elaborate up-to-date bibliographies. Several deal with conflict and war. Some findings are quite illuminating and plausible; for example, A. R. Wiegner analyses four major options available to the Israelis in 1967 and the reasons why a pre-emptive strike was the most rational choice, while J. Wilkenfeld tests the potency of three factors in determining international conflict behaviour in the Middle East. He convincingly demonstrates that such behaviour is related to the conflict individual states have been subjected to, and to their conflict activity in the past but, with the exception of Jordan, not to domestic conflict.

At the same time, many American undergraduates continue to use 'traditional' textbooks which are becoming increasingly sophisticated. It is of some interest to note the similarity of the contents of the third edition of the sound and common-sensical text by N. Padelford, the late G. A. Lincoln and L. Olvey, and that of the 1954 *International Politics*¹ by the first two of its authors on which it is based. The focus remains on the United States as the primary actor, but economics and technology receive much more treatment and decision-making is expanded into a separate part. The concluding part on the organisation of international community remains similar in structure and is relatively reduced in size.

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POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL

The Economics of the Oil Crisis. Edited by T. M. Rybczynski. *London: Macmillan for the Trade Policy Research Centre. 1976. 202 pp. £10.00.*

EARLY 1975 was a difficult time to publish a satisfactory volume on the economics of the oil crisis. The steady decline in the real price of oil during the 1960s had left energy economics in an intellectually barren state, and the damage was only just starting to be repaired when the climatic events of the autumn of 1973 overtook us all. This volume has its good points, but suffers very much from this previous lack of concern, in that the best chapters have least to do with the micro-economics of the oil and energy industries, concentrating more on the impact that oil price rises since the early 1970s will have had on the wider international economic scene.

The most stimulating contribution is Jan Tumlr's chapter on 'Oil Payments and Oil Debt and the Problem of Adjustment'. Fundamentally making a theoretical contribution, he points to the various outcomes which are dependent on whether we are seeing a financial or real transfer at work. He concludes to his satisfaction that the oil producers should be able to sustain an average growth of imports of 25 per cent per annum; that their current spending should equal current revenue around 1980; and that the surplus accumulated by then (about \$250 billion) should be re-absorbed by these countries within the subsequent three to four years.

Two other chapters by Max Corden (both in conjunction with Peter Oppenheimer) complement and expand Tumlr's analysis. They look at the

¹ *International Politics: Foundations of International Relations* (New York, London: Macmillan, 1954). Reviewed in *International Affairs*, April 1955, p. 272.